

PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The spur to develop what I present in this book came from a practical need. For my previous monograph on John Williams I needed to study his film music not as ‘music’, as mine was not a research in musicology, but in films history and stylistics. I also needed to analyse the role of his music in films, and Williams’s music, is mostly in the area of what would be called ‘accompaniment’ music, not ‘comment’ music. More than tools to interpret its meaning, I needed tools to analyse its formal agency. I came to the conclusion that Neoformalism was the right approach for my scope. As a former film-maker, when I watch a film that has some effects on me—perceptive, affective, semantic, ideological—what intrigues me most is to understand how those effects have been produced and induced. In general, I find Neoformalism a stimulating way of analysing films because it entails a sort of reverse engineering: from the finished artefact, one has to reconstruct and examine the creative steps that led to the result. Specifically, I have also found Neoformalism to be very helpful in investigating what music can do when combined with visuals. Since it has proven very handy to me, I resolved to develop a Neoformalism-based method to the study of music in film.

I call this method ‘Film/Music Analysis.’ The slash sign between ‘film’ and ‘music’ is not intended as a frill, a pretentious coinage—well, not only. If I say that I perform a ‘film–music analysis’ the general understanding is that I am going to dissect musicologically a piece of music written for the screen. The slash sign in film/music analysis is to be interpreted as a relational sign: this is an instance of film analysis in which

particular attention is placed on the music as to its interaction with the other components of the film. And the order is also important: in 'Film/Music Analysis' *film* analysis is the first concern, as it stems from a film scholar's perspective.

The work is articulated into three parts. Part one is the *Pars Destruens*, in which I present a review of the issues that I think make most past and current approaches incomplete or biased. Part two is the *Pars Construens*, in which I present my theoretical frameworks of reference, mainly Kristin Thompson's Neoformalism. But film music is also *music*, and even if the method I propose does not entail in-depth harmonic analysis or descriptions of the contrapuntal design and it strives to keep the references to the musical text to a minimum, some concepts from Music Studies are to be brought in. These are drawn principally from Leonard B. Meyer's music theories and connected to Neoformalism with an overarching framework based on Gestalt Psychology. Then, I propose a method to analyse music in films based on the spheres of mental activity in which the film-viewer is engaged: perception, emotion, and cognition. As guidelines for the analysis, I finally offer a set of three functions that music can fulfil in films, based on those three spheres of mental activity. The third part could be called *Pars Demonstrans*. One chapter consists of a set of case studies focussed on single topics and musical agencies: an examination and criticism of Stilwell's 'Fantastical Gap' in *Laura*, *The Witches of Eastwick* and *The Sea Hawk*; a discussion of Chion's 'anempathetic effect' in *Hangover Square* and *A Clockwork Orange*; a look into how songs and lyrics operate in films, with examples from *Breaking Bad* and *Casablanca*; an analysis of how music combines with the other cinematic elements in the opening-title sequences to set the tone for the narrative and prefigure future developments, with examples from classical Hollywood films and a more extended analysis of the opening sequence of *The Hateful Eight*; a study of the macro-emotive function of the music in *The Umbrellas of Cherbourg*. The closing chapter is a full analysis of *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* and *E.T. The Extraterrestrial*, focussing on how the score cooperates with the other filmic elements to produce the local and global design of the narration, and also comparing my film/music analysis of this pair of films with other recent analyses by musicologists.

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Emilio Audissino

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Audissino, E.

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